

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program

AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING BUREAU
Montana Department of Agriculture

Return all proposals to:

Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program
Montana Department of Agriculture – Agriculture Development Division
PO Box 200201
Helena, Montana 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402

Proposals shall be received on or before October 20, 2015.

Legal Authority:

(MCA) § 80-11-504 Montana Code Annotated
(ARM) § 4.6.203 Administrative Rules of Montana

MONTANA POTATO RESEARCH & MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program exists to “protect and foster the health, prosperity, and general welfare of the people of Montana” by promoting “intensive, scientific, and practical research into all phases of agricultural commodity culture, production, marketing, and the development of markets for commodities grown or produced in Montana.” MCA §80-11-502(2). Montana potato producers created the Program via an affirmative vote following the process outlined in MCA §§ 80-11-504 through 519. The Program is administered by the Montana Department of Agriculture, which receives advice from the seven-member Montana Potato Advisory Committee.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Montana Potato Advisory Committee invites proposals from organizations seeking funding from the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program for demonstration projects, applied research, and market development projects designed to address needs and opportunities for the Montana potato industry.

The Advisory Committee will review proposals at the first regular meeting of the year. It will recommend to the Department the projects it wishes to fund, and provide a suggested funding level. Recommended projects will be chosen based upon availability of funds, project type, industry need, and whether the project is new or ongoing. To qualify for consideration, proposals must have practical, near-term application that will stimulate an expanded Montana potato industry.

The Montana Potato Advisory Committee has established the following research priorities for the 2015-2016 funding cycle:

- 1. Management of potato viruses and their vectors;**
- 2. Stem and tuber diseases caused by fungi and bacteria (such as blackleg, scab, soft rot and ringrot); and**
- 3. Weeds as alternate hosts for potato pathogens.**

Research proposals must be innovative. To meet this burden, the applicant must demonstrate that there is not currently any relevant research available that is applicable to Montana producers. If relevant research is available, the applicant must explain how the proposed research will build upon the previous research.

WHO MAY APPLY

Public and private entities, organizations, businesses, educational institutions, local governments, and individuals are eligible to submit proposals.

DEADLINES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Proposals submitted under this RFP must be received **on or before October 20, 2015**. Proposals must be submitted through the Webgrants system at fundingmt.org. Instructions on using Webgrants can be found at: <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/Commodities/Checkoff/Potatoes/>

Questions about this RFP should be directed to:

Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program
Montana Department of Agriculture - ADD
PO Box 200201
Helena, Montana 59620-0201
(406) 444-2402
Jana Mertens (JMertens@mt.gov).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Proposals for funding will be accepted from:

- Public and Private Agencies and Organizations
- Business and Industry
- Educational Institutions
- Local Governments
- Individuals

If two or more individuals or organizations propose to conduct a project jointly, they should submit one application as co-applicants.

Applicants must demonstrate a proven ability to carry out all elements of the proposed project. In addition, applicants proposing to rely upon the expertise of another individual or organization to undertake any part of the project must clearly define the responsibilities of that party as well as provide evidence of their willingness and demonstrated ability to undertake that area of responsibility.

Employees of the Montana Department of Agriculture and their immediate families, and members of the Montana Potato Advisory Committee and their immediate families are excluded from eligibility for funding under this program. Immediate family includes mother, father, brother, sister, spouse and children.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Projects that address research programs to improve the quality of seed potatoes, develop and improve control measures for diseases and pests that attack potatoes, improve potato-growing culture, dissemination of such information, or plan, and conduct publicity and sales promotion campaigns will be considered.

Projects should be undertaken in Montana. Proposals for projects to be conducted outside of Montana must present clear evidence that the Montana potato industry will benefit from the activity.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible costs under the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program may include, but are not limited to:

- Salaries and Wages
- Fringe Benefits
- Consultant Services (professional, technical, operational)
- Travel
- Advertising and Promotion
- Equipment (preferably leased versus direct acquisition)
- Supplies and Materials
- Communication (telephone, postage, printing, etc.)
- Data Processing

Program funds cannot be used for the payment of institutional overhead or other indirect costs such as use of land, buildings or equipment. These costs can be used, however, in calculating the applicant match.

Under no circumstances shall funds awarded pursuant to this RFP be used for lobbying or political purposes.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals under the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program must be submitted to the Montana Potato Advisory Committee by 5PM on October 20, 2015. Proposals must be submitted through the Webgrants system at fundingmt.org. Instructions on using Webgrants can be found at: <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/Commodities/Checkoff/Potatoes/>

In order to be considered, proposals must be responsive to the objectives identified in this RFP. Each proposal must be limited to one project or activity only, the title of which must appear on the application.

The purpose of the proposal application is to provide evaluators with a written statement containing sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed activity is a sound approach to an important area of interest as outlined in the RFP, and that it merits financial support. Proposals will be judged principally on their adherence or conformity to the objectives and criteria indicated in this RFP, and the cost effectiveness of the proposed activity. The applicant may make a presentation in person at the Committee's annual meeting. The Committee will then make a recommendation to the Department whether or not to fund the project and the Department will then notify the applicant within 30 days.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

All applications must be submitted online through State of Montana Webgrants system located at Fundingmt.org. Paper materials will not be accepted. Applicants who have not previously used Fundingmt.org will be required to set up a username and password. It is highly recommended that interested applicants request a username at least 30 days prior to the due date of the proposal. Instructions on using the webgrants system to apply for this grant can be found at: <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/Commodities/Checkoff/Potatoes/>

PROPOSAL FORMAT

The application is divided into the following sections. The Department recommends that applicants first write their responses in a word processing program prior to entering information online.

Executive Summary

- 1) Project Title
- 2) Summary of the grant funding request
 - In this section, applicants should give a broad overview of the proposed project. Identify the need or opportunity that will be addressed, the work that will be done and what the expected outcome will be at the end of the grant period.
- 3) Start date
- 4) End date

Application Narrative

- 1) Problem and Objectives
 - Describe the problem or opportunity you intend to address with grant funds. If possible, provide data on the extent to which the issue is affecting Montana communities.
 - Indicate what you want to accomplish, driven by the problem you set out to address.
- 2) Approach
 - State how your research is innovative, how your proposal looks at a topic from a fresh point of view or develops or improves technology. Justify your proposal with background information about the research field that led to the research you are proposing.
 - Describe the experimental design and procedures and give a rationale for their use. State why you chose your approach(es) as opposed to others.
- 3) Expected outcomes or Hypothesis
 - How do you expect the completion of this project to benefit Montana producers? Describe how, as a result of the efforts undertaken in this proposal, the conditions facing Montana producers will be improved.

- Demonstrate that your hypothesis is important to the field, and you must have a means of testing it. Provide a rationale for the hypothesis, ensuring that it is based on current scientific literature, and explain why you chose the one you selected.
- 4) Contribution to previous work
 - Describe how this project builds on previous work. If this is a research project, explain how this project contributes to the scientific body of knowledge.
 - 5) Similar projects
 - Show that you consulted sources to ensure that there is not currently any relevant research available that is applicable to Montana.
 - If there is relevant research available, explain how it can either be expanded or built upon for Montana, or that, while it exists, it cannot be related to Montana crops, growing conditions, etc.
 - 6) Individuals involved
 - Provide the name and background of individuals involved in this project and what their role will be. If the individual is not yet hired, provide a position title and the ideal qualifications for that position.

Workplan

Use this section to describe the timeline for the project. Include key dates that are critical to the completion of the project. Key dates may include planting, application of treatments, harvest, publication of results etc.

- 1) Deliverable
 - What deliverable will the project provide? Examples may include: Developing Marketing Materials, Developing a Website, Attending Training, Hosting a Workshop, Steps in Conducting Research, Purchasing Equipment, etc.
- 2) Activities
 - Describe the activities you will undertake to achieve the deliverable.
- 3) Start date
 - The date you plan to start work on the activity.
- 4) End date
 - The date you anticipate that the deliverable will be completed.

Budget

Applicants can use Appendix A to this RFP to develop their budget prior to entering it into the FundingMT website. Applicants may request funds in the following areas:

- Salaries and Wages
- Fringe Benefits
- Consultant Services (professional, technical, operational)
- Travel

- Advertising and Promotion
- Equipment (preferably leased versus direct acquisition)
- Supplies and Materials
- Communication (telephone, postage, printing, etc.)
- Data Processing

Each category under which funds are requested must be accompanied by a brief explanation of how the funds will be expended.

Grant funds may not be used for indirect expenses. However, indirect expenses may be counted toward applicant match.

Attachments

The attachments section may be used to include any materials that will aid the committee in reviewing the application. Examples include maps, letters of support, charts and/or graphs. This section may not be used to add narrative that would not fit within character limits.

AWARDS

The Montana Potato Advisory Committee will recommend funding of successful projects through grant agreements under the Montana Potato Research & Market Development Program. Selected projects must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, licensing and regulations for funds to be awarded. Evidence of such compliance may be required.

The Department will develop a grant agreement, defining all project terms, conditions and responsibilities of the applicant. The grant agreement will, in addition, clarify all legal patents and proprietary rights that will result from the proposed activity. The grant agreement will incorporate this RFP and the successful applicant's final proposal among its provisions.

The Montana Department of Agriculture will notify each applicant whose proposal is not chosen for funding in writing within 30 days.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Montana Department of Agriculture staff will be responsible for monitoring each funded project.

Specific terms and conditions of each funded project will be contained in the formal grant agreement.

The Committee/Department reserves the right to determine the extent of reporting requirements, subject to modification in the course of the project. Interim reporting requirements will be based on the cost, duration and nature of the project.

The grant recipient may be required to make an oral report to the Committee at the conclusion of the project. The oral report will be made at a regularly scheduled Committee meeting.

A comprehensive final report will be required upon completion of the project. The final report should include:

- a comparison of actual findings and accomplishments of the project with goals and objectives described in the proposal;
- reasons for deviation from established goals of the proposal;
- a clear description of the commercial application and economic benefits, which accrued during the course of the project;
- a description of its immediate impact;
- an estimate of its long-term commercial and economic benefits.

In addition to the final project report, the Committee reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impact.

OWNERSHIP AND PUBLICATION OF MATERIALS

All information and materials generated by the proposed activity become the sole property of the State of Montana. The grant recipient will retain the right to utilize, reprint and distribute all said information and materials.

LIABILITY

The Montana Potato Advisory Committee or the Montana Department of Agriculture will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any works performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

RIGHT TO KNOW

Proposals selected for funding and all related contracts shall be subject to disclosure under the Montana Right to Know Law. Further, proposals not selected for funding will be subject to disclosure under the Right to Know Law.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee and Department reserve the right to:

1. Reject any or all proposals received pursuant to this RFP
2. Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and concurrence of applicant
3. Clarify the scope of this RFP, within the program requirements and with appropriate notice to all applicants, to best serve the interests of the state of Montana
4. Amend the RFP specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants
5. Require a good faith effort on the part of the project sponsors to work with the Committee and the Department of Agriculture.

Appendix A

Budget Development worksheet

EXPENDITURE CATEGORY	GRANT FUNDS REQUEST	APPLICANT MATCH PROVIDED	TOTAL
Salaries and Wages			
Fringe Benefits			
Consultant Services			
Travel			
Advertising & Promotion			
Equipment			
Supplies & Materials			
Communications			
Data Processing			
Indirect and Overhead	XXXXXXXXXX		
Other (Specify)			
TOTAL			